

# Growth: The Journal of the Association for Christians in Student Development

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Volume 1  
Number 1 *The State of Christian Student Affairs*

Article 8

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2001

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### Recommended Citation

Sheridan, Dennis A. and Anderson, Hilma (2001) "The Multicultural Competence of Resident Assistants in Christian Colleges and Universities," *Growth: The Journal of the Association for Christians in Student Development*. Vol. 1 : No. 1 , Article 8.

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# The Multicultural Competence of Resident Assistants in Christian Colleges and Universities

By Dennis A. Sheridan, Ed.D. and Ph.D.; and Hilma Anderson

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During the past twenty years America's colleges and universities have widely, if not always enthusiastically, embraced diversity and multiculturalism as desired goals of higher education. The creation of diverse student bodies, diverse faculties, and a more diverse intellectual canon (that incorporates heretofore excluded contributions of historically marginalized peoples) has been viewed as both ends and means in higher education. Diversity has been seen as an end in the sense that historical barriers (erected to exclude persons and their creative work from an equal place in higher education and American society) have continued to collapse, thus providing greater access and opportunity for the historically excluded. Diversity has been seen as a means in the sense that it provides a powerful educational dynamic that benefits everyone -- even the historically included. Considering diverse perspectives, opinions, cultural assumptions, and even approaches to truth requires learners (and teachers) to resolve underlying tensions and contradictions in a way that helps them become better prepared for a complex and diverse world.

Those of us in Christian colleges and universities appear to have a divided mind when it comes to issues of diversity and multiculturalism. Many of us find the ideas of discrimination, isolation, and exclusion to be abhorrent and contradictory to the teachings of Jesus while, at the same time, we cling to an Anglo, western, middle-class, and conservative view of truth and life. On the one hand, we eagerly desire to

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diversify our student bodies and our faculties to demonstrate greater openness and acceptance but, on the other hand, we are often unwilling to change the way we think or behave in relation to those who join our communities of higher education displaying differences in culture, ethnicity, religious tradition, age, sexual orientation, gender, social class, or disability.

In spite of this divided mind, however, Christian colleges and universities continue to seek greater diversity on their campuses. Sometimes the pursuit of diversity is driven by accreditation standards or the competition for prestige. Sometimes the push toward greater diversity is seen as a means to increase enrollment and improve the bottom line. Sometimes the motivation for increased diversity comes from a genuine desire to better serve historically excluded populations in the higher education enterprise. And sometimes, the leaders of our institutions pursue diversity because they see the benefits of diversity for all members of the educational community.

Whatever the motivations may be, the fact that Christian colleges and universities are becoming increasingly diverse is a reality of the new century. At issue is not the presence of diversity but the preparation for diversity. Are Christian colleges and universities prepared to make the necessary changes in attitudes, campus climates, educational practices, and co-curricular programming that will communicate hospitality and inclusion to historically underrepresented populations? The alternative is to preserve a kind of cultural homogeneity within our Christian institutions that views difference as a threat.

The purpose of this article is to explore the issue of multicultural competence in the co-curricular environment of Christian higher education. Of particular interest are the multicultural knowledge, attitudes, and skills of student leaders who are in key positions to work with diverse kinds of students. The multicultural competence of nearly 700 resident assistants from 33 Christian colleges and universities was recently assessed using a new instrument designed specifically for this purpose. The results of that assessment are reported in this article.

Resident assistants (RAs) are typically recognized as key student leaders on most college campuses, and their work is directly related to serving and interacting with residential college students (Winston & Fitch, 1993). Their competence in working successfully with multiple student populations is a reflection of their personal backgrounds, the culture of their college or university, and their preparation and training to serve as resident assistants. On most Christian college and university campuses, resident assistants are particularly important to the implementation of a successful co-curricular program and thus have tremendous influence among their fellow students.

## **Review of Literature**

During the past 30 years there has been growing recognition and concern among those in the helping professions that skilled helpers must be prepared to work with culturally diverse clients. Those in the counseling field led the way with calls for counselors to develop their cross-cultural communication skills (Pedersen, 1988), their own self-awareness of attitudes toward ethnic minorities (Parker & McDavis, 1979),

and their need for increased knowledge about minority populations (Mio, 1989).

In 1993 the American Psychological Association established new ethical guidelines that strongly encouraged psychological professionals to become multiculturally competent (Pope-Davis & Dings, 1994). The multicultural competence encouraged by those guidelines was envisioned as a tripartite construct comprised of multicultural attitudes, knowledge, and skills (Sue, et al., 1982). However, recent empirical research raises questions about the validity of this tripartite construct (Pope & Mueller, 2000). Obviously, much more research is needed in order to develop a stronger theoretical framework for understanding multicultural competence.

In the area of college student affairs there is a growing recognition that student affairs professionals must be prepared and skilled in multicultural issues. Several leaders in the profession have acknowledged the need for the development of these skills and have called for their inclusion in graduate preparation programs (Barr, 1993; Howard-Hamilton & King, 2000; Pope & Reynolds, 1997). Pope and Reynolds (1997) identified multicultural competence as one of the seven general areas of competence for student affairs professionals and went so far as to identify 29 specific characteristics of a multiculturally competent student affairs practitioner.

It is assumed that the development of multicultural competence among student affairs professionals will translate into positive benefits for the diverse undergraduate student bodies we encounter on today's college campuses. Developing multicultural competence should be a goal of both the formal curriculum and the less formal co-curriculum in American higher education. Howard-Hamilton, Richardson, and Shuford (1999) have identified 18 attributes of a culturally competent student that are very helpful in clarifying the desired outcomes of multicultural education with undergraduates. Their model includes three progressive levels of competence (awareness, understanding, and appreciation/valuing) across the three domains of multicultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Howard-Hamilton, Richardson, and Shuford, 1999). Hopefully, a multiculturally competent student affairs educator is better prepared to assist undergraduate students in the process of becoming multiculturally competent.

Resident assistants are neither professional staff nor typical students. They are paraprofessionals who are selected for their leadership qualities and are typically given pre-service and in-service training to assist them in being effective in their work with students (Ender & Carranza, 1991). Leaders in the student affairs field have continually called for effective programs to prepare RAs for their work in residence halls (Bowman & Bowman, 1995; Sandeen & Rhatigan, 1990). Twale and Muse (1996) found that the most common elements of RA training programs in liberal arts colleges were crisis intervention, conflict resolution, confrontation skills, safety and security issues, team building, policies and procedures, administrative duties, emergency responses, health topics, interpersonal relations, communication skills, programming, maintenance, knowledge of campus resources, and time and stress management. None of the liberal arts colleges in their study included diversity or multicultural issues in their RA training programs (Twale & Muse, 1996). It appears that multicultural education has not yet emerged as an area of concern for student affairs professionals in liberal arts institutions responsible for training resident assistants.

### The Instrument

The Social Response Inventory (SRI) is a 48-item paper and pencil questionnaire designed to measure multicultural competence in American college students. The SRI was developed by Sheridan, Anderson, and Sheridan (2000) in response to the lack of available and meaningful instrumentation to measure multicultural knowledge, attitudes, and skills in undergraduate college students. Each of the 48 items in the inventory poses a social situation to which participants are asked to respond using a seven-point semantic differential scale. The responses offered at the ends of each seven-point scale are designed to provide extreme and opposite possible reactions in that situation. One of the answers is considered to be the "competent" answer and the other is not.

The SRI examines three domains of multicultural competence consistent with the tripartite model proposed by Pope and Reynolds (1997) -- knowledge, attitudes, and skills. There are 16 questions for each of these domains among the 48 items of the instrument. Eight types of diversity are also explored by the instrument, including ethnicity, nationality, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, and social class. There are six questions related to each of these types of diversity.

As an example of the kinds of situations posed on the SRI, the following item is taken from the inventory and examines students' attitudes about gender:

**If a female voice announced on your airplane, 'This is your captain speaking,' you are likely to react with a feeling of ...**

**Confidence      1            2            3            4            5            6            7      Anxiety**

By choosing a "1" on the scale a student indicates a positive attitude toward a woman in a typically male-dominated career (airline pilots). A "7" would be an indication of a negative or stereotypical attitude toward women in this career field. By using a seven-point scale, students are given the opportunity to place themselves somewhere between the two extreme answers. This particular item is an example of one of the 16 items that measures multicultural attitudes. It is also one of the six items related to gender.

Initial field-testing of the SRI with approximately 1500 college students produced a Cronbach's alpha of .82 for the 48-item scale indicating rather strong internal reliability for the total scale. It was hoped that the subscales of the SRI (the three domains of knowledge, attitudes, and skills or the eight types of diversity) would be discreet enough and strong enough to be used as scores in their own right. However, internal reliability analysis and factor analysis do not support the use of subscales at this time. In the current research, the SRI has been used as a global measure of multicultural competence.

Given the socially sensitive or "politically correct" nature of the topic of multicultural competence, steps were taken to minimize the potential effects of social desirability. First, half of the items on the SRI are written so that the lowest number on the

scale ("1") reflected the multiculturally competent answer (as in the example above). For the other 24 items, the highest number on the scale ("7") is the multiculturally competent answer. Second, neither the title of the instrument nor the instructions for completing it explicitly reveal that the instrument is designed to measure multicultural competence. Students are told only that the instrument examines the many possible responses people have when faced with social situations involving those who are different from themselves in some way. Third, 20 items from the Crowne-Marlowe Social Desirability Scale (1960) are included on the instrument. The 20 true-false questions of this scale provide an indicator of a student's inclination to answer questions in a socially desirable fashion. The Crowne-Marlowe scale is a widely accepted measure of social desirability.

For reporting purposes, the scores for the Social Response Inventory and the Crowne-Marlowe Social Desirability Scale have been standardized. For the SRI, the national mean (based on nearly 1500 cases) has been normed at 100 with a standard deviation of 10. For the Crowne-Marlowe Social Desirability Scale, the national mean has been normed at 50 with a standard deviation of 10.

### The Sample

In November 2000 an invitation was sent through the email listserve of the Association of Christians in Student Development (ACSD) inviting members to participate in this survey of resident assistants. Individuals from 44 institutions expressed an interest in the study and asked for questionnaires. Completed questionnaires were received from 33 of the 44 institutions. Collectively, these 33 institutions had 1,038 resident assistants. A total of 695 completed questionnaires were returned for a response rate of 67%. Roughly half of the institutions (17) had response rates above 75%. Only eight institutions had response rates under 50%.

The SRIs were distributed and completed in a variety of settings. Some were completed during a weekly staff meeting or a classroom setting; others were distributed to resident assistants for return at a later time. All students were given (or had read to them) an explanation of the study, the associated benefits and risks of participating, a statement of the voluntary nature of the study, and contact information for any questions about this research.

Of the 695 students in the sample, the majority were female (57%) and white (89%). Only 7.5% of the participating resident assistants reported having a disability. The group is clearly middle-class with roughly one-fourth of the resident assistants falling in each of these family income categories: under \$40,000 per year (27%), \$40,000 to \$60,000 per year (26%), \$60,000 to \$80,000 per year (22%), and above \$80,000 per year (25%). The mean reported family income was interpolated to be about \$62,000 per year.

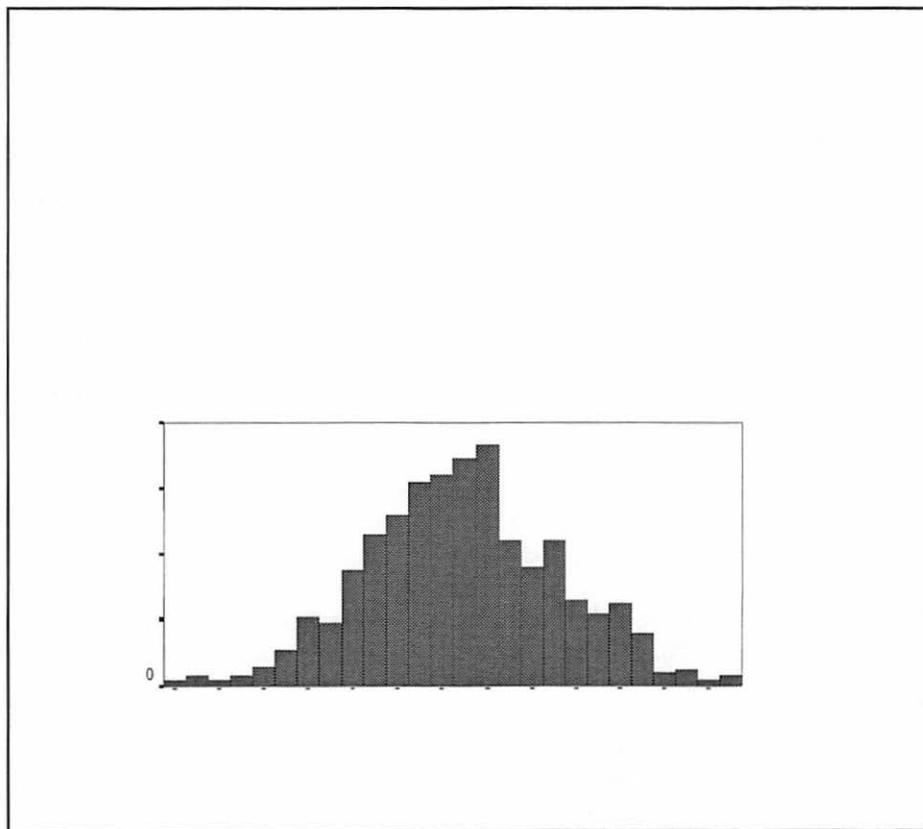
These RAs are fairly typical of resident assistants in Christian colleges and universities. The average age was 20.9 years, and 80% were junior and seniors. Politically, the participants are decidedly conservative with nearly three-fourths (73%) identifying themselves as either "conservative" or "far right." The remaining quarter

(27%) of the students preferred the designation of "middle of the road." Fewer than 1% of the students described themselves as "liberal."

Although these RAs attend Christian colleges and universities, many of which are denominationally affiliated, the majority of the RAs in the study identify their religious tradition as either "Nondenominational" (27%) or "Other Christian" (27%). Of the denominational affiliations provided, the largest group of students identified themselves as Baptist (22%). The remaining students were widely distributed among many denominations with meaningful numbers found only among those who identified themselves as Methodists (8%), Presbyterians (5%), and Roman Catholics (4%).

### Major Findings

Among the 695 RAs in this study, the mean standardized SRI score was 97.9 with a standard deviation of 8.63. This is slightly below the normative mean of 100, based on a larger national sample of nearly 1500 college students from many different kinds of institutions. Scores ranged from a low of 72 to a high of 122 among the RAs. The distribution of scores is displayed in Table 1.



*Comparisons with National Norms.* The SRI scores from the sample of 695 RAs were compared with national normative data using a one-sample t-test. This comparison shows that the RAs scored slightly lower (though statistically significant) than the national norm of 100 on multicultural competence. Social Desirability scores were also compared with the national norm of 50 using a one-sample t-test. This comparison revealed that the RAs scored significantly lower than the national average on social desirability. While the first comparison may indicate that the RAs are less multiculturally competent than those in the national normative group, the second comparison indicates that they are also less likely to answer questions on the questionnaire in a socially desirable way. In other words, they are more likely to be honest when answering questions on the questionnaire. These comparisons are displayed in Table Two.

**Table Two**  
**Comparison of SRI and Social Desirability Scores**  
**With National Norms**  
**(N=695)**

	<u>RA</u> <u>Mean</u>	<u>RA</u> <u>SD</u>	<u>National</u> <u>Mean</u>	<u>National</u> <u>SD</u>	<u>Mean</u> <u>Difference</u>	<u>t-Score</u>	<u>p-Value</u>
SRI Scores	97.86	8.63	100.00	10.00	-2.14	-6.55	<.001*
Social Desir. Scores	49.01	9.79	50.00	10.00	-.99	-2.64	.008*

\*statistically significant

*Comparisons Among Resident Assistants.* Differences were found among the 695 RAs on SRI scores based on sex and political orientation. Female RAs scored slightly higher than males ( $t = 4.42$ ;  $p < .001$ ) and politically middle-of-the-road RAs score higher than those who consider themselves politically conservative ( $t = 7.25$ ;  $p < .001$ ). No significant differences were found in mean SRI scores among RAs based on their class in school, their family income, or their age. These findings are found in Table Three:

**Table Three**  
**Comparison of SRI Scores Among Resident Assistants**  
**(N = 695)**

	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>Mean Difference</u>	<u>t-Score</u>	<u>p-Value</u>
<u>By Sex</u>					
Males (N = 291)	96.24	8.39	2.92	4.42	<.001*
Females (N = 379)	99.16	8.52			
<u>By Political Orientation</u>					
Middle of the Road (N = 168)	101.90	9.22	5.44	7.25	<.001*
Conservative (N = 458)	96.46	7.97			

\*statistically significant

*Predictors of Multicultural Competence.* A hierarchical stepwise multiple regression analysis was performed to identify the significant predictors of multicultural competence for the resident assistants in the sample. Social desirability was entered into the equation in the first block in order to control for its effects in subsequent steps of the analysis. The second block of variables included sex, ethnicity (white and non-white), classification (freshman through senior), family income, disability status, age, and political orientation. Social desirability was shown to be a significant predictor of SRI scores ( $b = .22$ ), indicating that the total scores are somewhat affected by the inclination of some participants to provide what they may perceive to be socially desirable answers. Once social desirability is controlled, however, three additional variables entered the stepwise multiple regression equation as significant predictors of multicultural competence. These predictors include political orientation ( $b = -.27$ ), sex ( $b = .16$ ), and family income ( $b = -.11$ ).

As was described earlier, politically conservative students are less likely to score as high on the SRI as are students who classify themselves as politically middle-of-the-road. Female students are likely to score higher on the SRI than males. Family income appears to be negatively correlated with multicultural competence, meaning that SRI scores tend to decline as family income increases. Collectively, these four predictor variables account for approximately 15% of the total variance in SRI scores. Age, ethnicity, disability status, and classification in school were not significantly related to SRI scores. The findings of the stepwise multiple regression analysis are shown in Table Four.

**Table Four**  
**Predictors of Multicultural Competence**  
**in Resident Assistants in Christian Colleges and Universities**  
**(N = 695)**

		Beta <sup>1</sup> After Step					
		r	R <sup>2</sup>	1	2	3	4
<u>Variables Entering at Step</u>							
1.	Social Desirability	.22	.04	.22	.21	.20	.20
2.	Political Orientation	-.27	.12	-.27	-.27	-.26	-.27
3.	Sex	.17	.14	.17	.16	.16	.16
4.	Family Income	-.09	.15	-.09	-.11	-.11	-.11
<u>Variables Not in the Equation</u>							
Age				.06	.06	.07	.05
Ethnicity = white				-.04	-.04	-.04	-.04
Disability				.00	.02	.03	.03
Classification				.02	.02	.02	.01

<sup>1</sup> Beta is the term used in multiple regression analysis for a standardized regression coefficient. The reader may think of these scores as correlations.

*Comparisons Among Schools.* SRI scores were compared among the RAs in 17 of the participating Christian colleges and universities. The schools used in this comparison had a minimum of 10 participating RAs and at least a 75% participation rate in the survey. A one-way analysis of variance indicated that there are significant differences among these 17 institutions ( $F = 3.61$ ;  $p < .001$ ). However, comparisons between individual schools will not be reported here. The results are shown in Table Five with schools grouped by region and mean SRI scores given in descending order.

**Table Five**  
**Comparison of Resident Assistant SRI Scores**  
**Among 17 Christian Colleges and Universities**  
**(N = 472)**

College or University	N	Mean	SD
<b>East (2 Institutions)</b>			
College A	55	100.6	7.8
College B	36	96.8	9.2
<b>South (4 Institutions)</b>			
College A	18	102.6	7.0
College B	13	100.0	9.0
College C	31	96.1	8.3
College D	22	94.0	8.0
<b>Midwest (9 Institutions)</b>			
College A	23	106.2	7.5
College B	27	100.1	8.4
College C	27	98.3	7.9
College D	41	97.6	8.3
College E	34	97.5	8.0
College F	19	97.5	7.1
College G	11	96.3	8.4
College H	37	94.9	7.4
College J	14	94.4	6.5
<b>West (2 Institutions)</b>			
College A	46	99.2	7.0
College B	18	98.2	7.5
<b>Total (17 Institutions)</b>			
RAs in 17 Selected Schools	472	98.3	8.2
National Sample	1489	100.0	10.0
RAs in 17 Sel. Schools	472	98.3	8.2
National Sample	1489	100.0	10.0

*Comparison with Social Work Majors.* Since the SRI is still being field-tested, there are few identifiable undergraduate populations with whom to compare these Christian college resident assistants. However, one sample of approximately 200 social work majors in public and private secular colleges and universities provides an opportunity for comparing the resident assistant SRI scores. An independent-samples t-test was performed comparing the SRI scores of these two groups revealing that social work majors scored significantly higher on the SRI than did the RAs in Christian colleges. This comparison is displayed in Table Six.

**Table Six**  
**Comparison of RAs and Social Work Majors on SRI Scores**

	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Standard Deviation</u>	<u>Mean Difference</u>	<u>t-Score</u>	<u>p-Value</u>
RA SRI Scores (N=695)	97.86	8.63	9.54	13.01	<.001*
Social Work SRI Scores (N = 212)	107.40	10.86			

\*statistically significant

*Qualitative Data.* The SRI contains a single open-ended question that produced limited qualitative data for analysis. This question simply asks students to share any thoughts, feelings, or reactions they had while completing the questionnaire. Approximately 25% of the participants wrote something in the space that was provided, though most of the comments were very brief. These comments were transcribed into a separate data file and analyzed for themes. This analysis of qualitative data produced four distinct themes.

First, many students were highly critical of the Social Desirability Scale. To many students, these 20 true-false items appeared to be out of place and unrelated to the rest of the study. This was typical of the comments about these items:

*The true-false statements were quite absolute and I had a hard time answering them. I felt uncomfortable answering them because they were very negative.*

From the perspective of the students, it is easy to understand their suspicion and concern about these items. In fact, one student very blatantly wrote in the margins, "What is this, an honesty test?" While he was pretty close to the truth, such a disclo-

sure on the instrument would invalidate its usefulness. Since the Crowne-Marlowe Social Desirability Scale (1960) has been widely and successfully used for 40 years, it serves a very useful measure of social desirability and is very relevant to the purpose in this particular research.

Secondly, a number of comments could be categorized as criticisms of the SRI itself. Some students were critical of a particular item; others were critical of the entire framework of the questionnaire. For example, one student wrote:

*I don't really understand what methods are being used to measure here. Most of the question responses will vary greatly in differing situations, so it is hard to answer them positively.*

Another student wrote:

*This is very controversial; I would rather explain my reasonings.*

And another said:

*I think these questions are very vague. There are too many factors involved in many of the questions to answer decisively. Number 40 is completely disgusting. My thoughts on most of these questions are why should I care?*

Some of the critical comments about the construction of the SRI are simply the result of not understanding the process of social research methodology. Comments from students implying that they simply "don't care" about these issues are discouraging. All of the feedback provided by these students, however, will be very useful in future revisions of the SRI.

Thirdly, students had very strong reactions to the items on the questionnaire related to homosexuality. Though some students expressed concern that there was an "overemphasis on homosexuality," there were, in fact, an equal number of items devoted to each of the eight types of diversity included in the instrument. As conservative Christians, most of the RAs who commented on the issue of homosexuality wanted to express their desire to be accepting of people while not accepting of their behavior. As one student expressed:

*Several questions about gays were difficult to answer. Due to my religious beliefs, I think it is not an acceptable lifestyle. However, I treat all people with the respect they deserve and do not discriminate.*

Another wrote:

*Homosexuality issues are quite different than ethnic, racial, gender, handicapped and age issues. Certain groups believe that whereas no specific*

*'good' or 'bad' value should be attributed to say, male or female, homosexuality is an immoral, disruptive, and hurtful lifestyle.*

Another student tried to express the tension between her views of homosexuality and her desire to relate positively to those who are homosexual:

*There are a lot of questions about homosexuality. I believe it is wrong and don't support it but I also will not be prejudiced, ignore, or not relate with these people in a positive way.*

There is no question that issues of homosexuality on a Christian college campus are controversial. These students obviously struggle with the difficulty of reconciling competing theological and biblical understandings of loving others on the one hand without supporting and promoting a lifestyle they consider sinful on the other.

Finally, there were many students who felt challenged by the questionnaire to explore these issues more thoroughly and to examine their own multicultural competence. As one student admitted:

*I do not dislike other cultures, but in many ways I am very ethnically ignorant. I do not have problems with people who are disabled, but again I am ignorant. Ignorant may not be as good a word as unexposed. I think I would laugh at an ethnic joke just to be part of the group. I know that's horrible.*

Another shared these thoughts:

*Unfortunately, I hated to answer some of these the way I did. But that's the way I've been brought up. Maybe it's time to start seeing and learning for myself. It's hard to realize that the world I live in is sometimes existed in blindly.*

One student was particularly complimentary of the SRI:

*It was good to be able to meditate and reflect on my knowledge, understandings, and views. This well-rounded group of questions helped me to do that.*

It is very encouraging to see that the instrument has a potential benefit in helping students ask important questions about themselves, their values, and their cultural assumptions. Many of these participants are traditional-aged students who are deeply involved in the process of identity formation. The varied comments on the questionnaire are a reflection of students who are in many different phases of this process. Many are simply not yet developmentally and emotionally ready to examine themselves on these issues. Others find participating in this experience is enriching and gives voice to their views on issues that are becoming increasingly important to them.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

Since the Social Response Inventory is still undergoing development and revision, care must be given in interpreting these findings. While the evidence is growing that the SRI is a meaningful tool for measuring multicultural competence, the conclusions reached as a result of this research should be measured and considered somewhat tentative. There is evidence, however, to suggest that resident assistants in Christian colleges and universities are less prepared for dealing with differences than are other students who comprise the national sample of 1500 students who have taken the SRI to date, particularly when they are compared with social work majors. Since social work majors are exposed to a formal curriculum that specifically prepares them for work with many client populations, it may be helpful to consider elements of the social work curriculum in pre-service and in-service RA training programs.

As an assessment tool, the Social Response Inventory holds great promise for the future. First, the instrument could be used as a pre-test and post-test measure for evaluating the effectiveness of educational programs designed to enhance students' multicultural competence. Second, the SRI could be useful as a teaching tool to generate discussion about multicultural issues. Rarely do students complete the instrument without having their thoughts and emotions engaged with the subject of multiculturalism. If well managed, these feelings could be channeled into a rich dialogue as students and student affairs professionals engage one another in meaningful interaction about the Christian response to difference, both interpersonally and institutionally. Finally, the SRI could be used in program evaluation to compare the multicultural competence of RAs in one institution with those in other institutions or with national data, much as has been done in this study. As the national SRI database grows, multiple kinds of comparisons will be available.

Those responsible for RA training programs should seriously consider the inclusion of multicultural education as an element of both pre-service and in-service training programs. There is evidence from this research to suggest that male RAs are less prepared for working with diverse kinds of students than are female RAs and that more affluent RAs are less prepared for diversity than are less affluent RAs. Collectively, these findings suggest that most, if not all, RAs could benefit from a training curriculum that specifically addresses the knowledge base, the values and attitudes, and the skills necessary to work with students of diverse backgrounds.

Increasingly, those in the student affairs profession are coming to recognize that multicultural competence is an essential skill for those who desire to be effective co-curricular educators. Likewise, resident assistants, as paraprofessional staff, need enhanced skills in working with individual students and student groups who are culturally different in some way. Everyone will not agree on the content of such multicultural education; the topic is filled with potential conflict. Rarely do people engage in serious dialogue about multicultural knowledge, attitudes, and skills without emo-

tions becoming aroused. However, there are marginalized students in our Christian colleges and universities who will never feel that they are truly a part of the community until the leadership of the institutions, both professional and paraprofessional, demonstrates the hospitality that results from multicultural competence. This topic must be added to our common agenda. May the conversations begin.

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